

INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

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LAKE ISOM, TENN., BECOMES U. S. WATERFOWL SANCTUARY

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Lake Isom in Lake and Obion Counties, Tenn., has been added to the chain of waterfowl sanctuaries that the U. S. Department of Agriculture maintains along the Mississippi flyway. A recent executive order by President Roosevelt sets aside 1,521 acres of land for the refuge.

Although the new sanctuary, which adjoins Reelfoot Lake, is not as large as other refuges along the Mississippi flyway, it is in a section where large numbers of wild ducks and geese feed and rest during their annual migrations. The section has also been heavily hunted for waterfowl.

Surveys by the Bureau of Biological Survey show that the refuge area harbors a variety of bird life. A large colony of American egrets that breeds on Reelfoot Lake uses Lake Isom as a feeding ground. Little blue, great blue, and green herons, wood ibises, killdeer, double-crested cormorants, solitary sandpipers, and anhingas or water turkeys, have also been observed. Waterfowl that use the area include wood ducks, American widgeons, ring-necked ducks, mallards, pintails, blue and green-winged teal, lesser scaups, shovelers, and canvasbacks.

Lake Isom, records show, was once a part of Reelfoot Lake that was formed about 1812 by the sinking of land as a result of an earthquake. The overflow from Reelfoot Lake, which drains a large section of southwestern Kentucky and northwestern Tennessee, empties into Lake Isom through a spillway in a highway connecting Tiptonville and Union City. A drainage ditch through the bed of Lake Isom was deepened several years ago, but attempts to raise farm crops on the south end of the lake bed failed as the land remained too wet. Since then the area has become heavily wooded.

Refuge lands being acquired by the Farm Security Administration will be assigned to the Biological Survey for administration. Plans for maintaining constant water levels through the construction of dikes and water-control structures, and otherwise improving the area are being made by the Survey. A headquarters building already has been completed on a site previously acquired.